

Testimony before the Appropriations Committee
Health Subcommittee on DMHAS Budget

Thursday 2/23/17

Barbara Albert, Hartford Renter

Good evening members of the Appropriations Committee, also to everyone else. My name is Barbara Albert, renter, registered voter in Hartford, CT. I am an Advocate and Activist for Human Rights on the Neighborhood, City, State, and National Levels. I'm an Advocate with **Keep the Promise Coalition**, and many other Human Rights Organizations. I have multiple medical challenges, and am on Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security Disability. Am familiar with society's ruthlessness and non-empathetic messages concerning those of us with Brain Illness(s), and/ or Disorder(s). The words, the looks of fear and disgust, needs to stop. I already feel horrible; don't believe assistance is necessary from others' misconceptions, and lack of understanding. It is **not** just medical challenges we need to cope with everyday. For me this allows absolutely no feelings of chance for hope; quality of life, to me, will always be out of reach. I participate in volunteer jobs, when not overwhelmed by one or more of my many medical challenges. I did work 'regular jobs' before becoming too chronically ill.

Please **do not support** consolidating the Regional Mental Health Boards, CT. Legal Rights Project, and Grants for Mental Health, Substance use and Employment Opportunities. Why? To make cuts from human beings, who most need help, to "share sacrifice" even more? I'm chronically ill; I did not stop being a Human Being. With basic human needs, this includes Human support as well, especially for those of us with no "family". I've thankfully, been involved with several Regional Mental Health Board community activities and supports. I'm beyond grateful for phone contact, it's not only informational, it's knowing that someone is actually taking time to listen, even times when only mumbling comes out my face. For me, this is priceless. I don't have internet access. I have what society calls Learning Disabilities; I barely get anything done at a library computer, or any computer. Thanks to CT. Legal Rights Project, and other friends, I'm not homeless, and am getting help with struggling against housing discrimination, and by someone in the medical field. I've been having extreme difficulty with going for any medical help. It has turned into not trusting any 'new to me doctor'. I am unable to describe how offended I feel. I'm terrified of my Brain Illness/Disorders medical information being used against me. I've been known for standing/speaking up for what I believe in despite being labeled with "crazy".

Stigma, discrimination, social injustice, gender inequality, and continued bad policy making, continue to undermine access to basic human needs Discrimination is against the law. This denies any kind of hope for recovery, even denies recognition as a human being as well as feeling I deserve to be treated and feeling like a human being. I have no reason to be optimistic. My chronic illnesses continue to deteriorate, to the point of, I am literally, not "breathing someone else's air, or taking up their space". Everyone is eligible to become ill. Everyone is eligible to become older. Why are human beings like me still being treated like persona non-grata?

Stop the apathy and indifference. Dorothy Day, a civil disobedience peace activist said, " Our problems stem from our acceptance of this filthy, rotten system."

Thank you for listening.

Respectfully,

Barbara Albert